

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

www.iowadnr.com

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1. Trout Fishing Opportunities to Debut in Central Iowa
2. Bobcat Study Beginning Second Year
3. Worried About Acorn Production this Year?
4. Becoming Outdoor Women – by Joe Wilkinson

TROUT FISHING OPPORTUNITIES TO DEBUT IN CENTRAL IOWA

DES MOINES – Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park will become the only central Iowa trout fishery when it receives its first stocking of Iowa rainbow trout during the park dedication on Thursday. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will initially stock 2,500 of the one-half pound hatchery raised trout along with a few of the trophy sized brood fish.

Marion Conover, chief of the DNR's fisheries bureau, said the fish will be stocked in the larger basin in the park and that two follow up stockings later this fall and winter will allow anglers a different type of fishing experience in central Iowa.

"We are hopeful that central Iowa anglers will jump at the chance to go trout fishing close to home," Conover said. "This type of fall and winter trout fishing experience has proven to be popular at lakes in Mason City and Waterloo and we expect it to be successful here, too."

Anglers who want to fish for the trout are required to purchase the trout privilege for \$11 in addition to an Iowa fishing license. This is a regulation change that began last year. Previously, only anglers keeping trout were required to pay the trout fee.

"We have had such an increase in the number of people fishing for trout and not keeping them who were using the resource but not contributing to the program. We had to make the change to continue to provide the popular fishery," Conover said.

The daily bag limit for trout is five and the possession limit is 10.

For more information, contact Conover at 515-281-5208.

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BOBCAT STUDY BEGINNING SECOND YEAR

CHARITON – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the second year of a three-year study with Iowa State University investigating bobcat ecology throughout Iowa, focusing on an eight county area in south central Iowa.

The first year of the study resulted in placing radio-tags on 23 bobcats during the fall and winter trapping season. Currently, the study has bobcats with radio tags in Warren, Marion, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe, Appanoose and Davis counties.

The study found male bobcats home range averaged 58 square miles and up to 120 square miles, whereas the females averaged 10 square miles during the winter. Some juvenile bobcats have dispersed up to 49 miles from where they were born.

Todd Gosselink, wildlife research biologist with the Iowa DNR, said hunters and trappers are a vital part of the study. He said the DNR will work closely with trappers this fall to collect information on bobcats and to place radio collars on bobcats accidentally caught in traps in Marion, Warren, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe Decatur, Wayne and Appanoose counties.

The DNR has scheduled four public meetings to discuss the bobcat project. The meetings will also discuss the rare mountain lion sightings in Iowa, separating fact from fiction. The meetings are open to all public interested in the study and mountain lions in Iowa. The meetings are at 7 p.m., Oct. 12, at the Annette Nature Center, 15565 188th Avenue, Indianola; at 7 p.m., Oct. 19 at the Van Wert Community Center, 120th Street, Van Wert; at 7 p.m., Oct. 21 at Pin Oak Lodge, 45996 Hwy. 14, Chariton; and at 2 p.m., Oct. 23 at the Appanoose County Nature Center in Sharon Bluffs Park, 25100 520th Street, east of Centerville.

The DNR is asking the public to report any bobcat sightings in Iowa. Reports can be made by email to todd.gosselink@dnr.state.ia.us or by phone at 641-774-2958.

For more information, contact Gosselink at 641-774-2958.

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WORRIED ABOUT ACORN PRODUCTION THIS YEAR?

Des Moines – Late frosts this past spring has limited the acorn crop across Iowa available for wildlife to use this winter.

“It is not unusual for poor acorn crop every three to five years,” said John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forestry bureau. “Acorn crops are cyclic in nature, some years there are more acorns than people like and then there is this year – will only scattered acorns hitting the ground. Fortunately, for our native wildlife there appears to be fair to good seed crops of other plants, such as walnuts, ash, hackberry and hickory nuts.”

Despite the lack of acorns this autumn, the State Forest Nursery and many Iowa grown private nurseries planed ahead by stocking up during good seed years and growing extra trees during poor seed years.

“We have over a half million red oak seedlings for conservation plantings available this fall and for next spring,” said Walkowiak. “One way that landowners can help minimize impacts on wildlife during poor seed crops is to plant a diversity of native trees and shrubs so that there is always some mast crop available.”

The State Forest Nursery, in Ames, has a good supply of more than 44 different kinds of native trees and shrub seedlings for conservation purposes on private as well as public lands.

The plants are 6 to 24 inches tall, and sell for \$.25 to \$.45/plant in lots of 100 plants. There is a minimum order of 500 plants, which would cover about one acre of land. For those who have less land available, there are a number of different wildlife packets containing 200 trees and shrubs, for \$90 which includes shipping.

For more information about conservation plantings and where you can get Iowa grown nursery stock, go to www.iowatreeplanting.com or call the State Forest Nursery at 1-800-865-2477.

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BECOMING OUTDOOR WOMEN

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Deliberately roll your kayak? Who would do such a thing? Standard procedure at this fall's Becoming an Outdoor Woman workshops.

“Most people did it, though,” admits Nancy Geisking. “It was quite a challenge; sort of freaky for me.” Geisking, of North Liberty, was one of 95 ‘BOW’ participants at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Springbrook Education Center, near Guthrie

Center a couple weeks ago. Instructors emphasized the ‘self-dunking’ since kayaks do tip over, and to show kayakers how to right themselves and continue.

The whole weekend was ‘hands on’ training. The women learned how to catch a fish, clean a fish, cook outdoors, handle a muzzleloader and—generally—do all sorts of outdoor stuff they might never have imagine. “BOW is set up as an entry level workshop,” explains workshop coordinator Julie Sparks with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “It’s about one-third hunting and shooting sports, one-third fishing and one-third ‘nonconsumptive’ activities like camping, hiking, reading the woods.”

At the same time about half the participants return each year. Sparks says that’s why there are new activities and new skills to learn. Geisking has been coming for about four years and convinced her daughter, Vanessa Frank to come along this time. “Even if you knew something about an activity, there was still plenty to learn,” concedes Frank, of Tiffin. Her favorite? “Probably Dutch oven cooking. I’m ready to go out and get one. We made an almond cake in it,” laughs Frank. “It was so surprising what you could do.”

For \$135, BOW women have the weekend reserved; sleeping dormitory style and sitting down to hot cafeteria meals, supplemented by the occasional fire-baked cake. For variety, there is a winter BOW workshop in most years which offers everything from dog-sledding to ice fishing to skinning a deer (courtesy of a nearby road kill that morning). Over the last couple years, too, spring workshops have been held in other parts of the state. Geisking took a big step beyond that, attending the international BOW workshop, in the Bahamas last March. At a time when traditional hunting and fishing numbers are slipping, yet as more Americans have opportunities to head outdoors, BOW quite obviously is reaching out to an underutilized client base; women. Most instructors are women, too.

Participants select from a menu of activities. Some, such as photography or basic camping, begin in a classroom and move outdoors. Others, like canoeing, kayaking or trapshooting are on location throughout Education Center grounds or the adjacent Springbrook State Recreation Area. And was that Christie Vilsack on the gun range this fall? You bet. Iowa’s First Lady tried her hand, breaking clay targets with a shotgun, among her choices.

So did Katie Weisberg, from Osceola. The three-year deer hunter, agrees it’s a different feel, swinging on game. “I’m right-handed and usually swing to the left. Now, I can swing to the right, too,” says Weisberg. “In wing shooting, you have to follow through and be on target. When deer hunting, I usually sit on stand and wait for a broadside.”

So which is harder? “Wing shooting, definitely,” she admits.

Emily Hart admits she’s not ready for a seven day hike, but is ready to backpack after BOW. Kayaking, too. “I’ve always wanted to learn and never had the opportunity

(until BOW),” says Hart, of Iowa City. “I never thought I’d be one to bird-watch (but) I thoroughly enjoyed it...I was exposed to outdoor activities that I otherwise wouldn’t have experienced.”

As everyone else portage their canoes up to the trailer, Mary Patten of Spirit Lake holds back for another lap around the beach area. “I’ve never done this before,” she announces. “It was peaceful and calm out here. My friend and I managed to strike up a rhythm paddling and we did great. It was perfect!”

Her friend, Marilyn Banwart, was the old pro. She had canoed all of one time, before this. “My first time, I did most of my paddling from the front,” recalls Banwart, of Emmetsburg. “This time, I learned to do the steering from the back. That’s more of a challenge. I really enjoyed it.”

The two had agreed to try BOW together this fall. “We have a lot of friends; mother/daughter pairs, maybe sisters,” notes Sparks. “We range in age from 18 to 60-plus. We’ll have a sister from Iowa and another come back from out of state. We have a lot of family here.”

Sparks says that opportunity to learn outdoor skills alongside other novices, as well as the chance for a weekend getaway with family or friends, keeps BOW healthy, spring, winter and fall.

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